

highlights

a weekly digest of recently released British Columbia statistics

Median Income of Taxfilers

- **BC taxfilers had a median income of \$20,000—5.3% above the national median of \$19,000—in 1996.** For the third year in a row, BC (6.2%) led the nation in terms of the percentage of total income derived from investments.

The median income of women (\$15,800) in the province was 59.2% as high as men's (\$26,700). The national average was 57.4%. BC women experienced the largest increase in the female-to-male income ratio in the country, with the ratio increasing from 57.3% to 59.2% between 1995 and 1996.

For taxfilers who reported earnings from employment, the median income in BC was \$21,800 (\$27,900 for men and \$17,100 for women). *Source: SC, Small Area and Administrative Data*

Government Transfer Payments

- **BC taxfilers received \$18.04 in government transfer payments for every \$100.00 they earned in 1996.** The province's economic dependency ratio (EDR) was below the national average (19.77), but higher than in Ontario (17.60), Alberta (13.38) and the North. Newfoundland (34.86) and PEI (31.61) had the highest EDRs in the country.

BC was one of only four regions where the EDR increased between 1995 (17.92) and 1996 (18.04). The main reason for the change in BC's ratio was a significant increase (from 0.12 to 0.85) in the EDR for provincial refundable tax credits and family benefits, which was undoubtedly due to the introduction of the BC Family Bonus program. Pension payments (Old Age Security and CPP) also rose more than employment income, but the EDR for other

transfers such as social assistance and employment insurance was lower than in 1995.

Source: SC, Small Area and Administrative Data

Prices

- **British Columbians continued to benefit from a relatively low inflation rate (+0.5%) in July.** This compares to a national average of 1.0%, with overall price changes in other provinces ranging from -1.0% in PEI (where the CPI declined for the fifth straight month) to 1.5% in both Alberta and Saskatchewan. BC's inflation rate continues to be low, but it has been edging up since February, when it reached a low of -0.1%. Vancouver's annual inflation rate was 1.1%—its highest level in two years—in July. Prices increased only marginally (+0.2%) in Victoria.

A steady decline in the cost of housing (-2.7% in July) during the last three years is largely responsible for BC's persistently below-average inflation rate. During this period, BC residents have also benefited from below-average price increases for recreation, educational and reading material, as well as alcohol and tobacco. However, prices for other goods and services have increased more in BC than for all of Canada.

Source: Statistics Canada

The Economy

- **BC recorded the strongest shipment growth (+5.3%, seasonally adjusted) in the country in June.** Wood (+6.0%) and paper (+13.1%) shipments rose for the first time since February, and shipments by the food products industry were up 2.5% from May. Other industries posting significant increases in the value of shipments include electrical and electronic equipment (+27.9%), leather

Did you know...?

Canada exported more than 1.9 million live pigs in the first six months of this year. That's 28.6% more than in the same period last year. The US is our most important customer, but Japan, Russia and South Korea are becoming important markets for Canadian pig exports.

(+12.7%) and refined petroleum and coal products (+10.7%) manufacturers. Shipments fell in all but four provinces and were down 2.9% nationally. Ontario manufacturers' shipments dropped 5.9%, largely due to the effects of plant shutdowns resulting from the GM strike in the United States.

The improvement in June was not strong enough to offset earlier declines, and shipments by BC manufacturers decreased 3.3% (seasonally adjusted) between the first and second quarters. This marked the fourth consecutive quarterly decline in the value of BC's manufacturing shipments. Nationally, shipments fell for the second straight quarter (-1.0%), largely due to weakness in Ontario (-2.0%), Alberta (-1.8%) and BC.

Source: Statistics Canada

- **Retail sales in British Columbia edged down 0.3% (seasonally adjusted) between May and June.** The decline was part of a nationwide trend, with Canadian sales decreasing 1.7%. Sales fell in all but four regions: Yukon (+1.8%), Manitoba (+1.6%), PEI (+0.2%) and Newfoundland (+0.2%). Ontario (-2.5%), Quebec (-2.2%) and Alberta (-2.0%) posted the largest declines.

Source: Statistics Canada

- **Unadjusted retail sales in the second quarter were unchanged from the same period of last year.** Sales by drug stores (-6.2%), automotive (-2.8%) and furniture (-1.6%) retailers in the province declined. Clothing stores recorded only a modest gain (+0.3%), but general merchandise (+2.0%) and food (+4.6%) stores posted more substantial increases. Nationally, retail sales were up 5.0% from the second quarter of 1997, with sales increasing in all major groups at rates ranging from 3.3% for automotive retailers to 8.4% for drug stores.

Source: Statistics Canada

- **Wholesale sales (seasonally adjusted) in the province did not change between May and June.** Nationally, sales declined 1.7% as sales weakened in all provinces except Newfoundland (+2.1%), Quebec (+0.7%) and BC. On a quarterly basis, wholesale sales in the province were down 0.7% from the first quarter.

Source: Statistics Canada

- **Exports of BC products continued their year-long decline in June, dropping to 9.1% below the June 1997 level.** The decline was largely due to continued weakness in the forest products sector (-17.6%). BC's exports of energy products (-34.0%) and industrial goods (-1.8%) also fell. However, international sales of automotive products (+80.8%), consumer goods (+47.6%), and machinery and equipment (+5.3%) were higher than a year earlier. Exports fell in six provinces but were up 4.7% overall, boosted by the strong performances of Quebec (+18.8%) and Ontario (+5.5%). The value of Alberta's exports continued to falter, decreasing for the seventh straight month (-4.5%) in June.

Source: Statistics Canada

- **During the first six months of the year, BC's exports have fallen to 12.2% below the same period of last year.** Alberta (-12.1%) was the only other province to show a similarly large decline. More moderate decreases were observed in Saskatchewan (-5.2%) and New Brunswick (-1.4%), while exports increased in all other provinces. PEI (+35.6%) led the way, due to strong growth in exports of agriculture and fish products, but exports from Quebec (+13.8%), Manitoba (+8.0%) and Ontario (+7.9%) were also strong. Canadian exports were up 3.8% year-to-date.

Exports to all of BC's major markets except the US (+0.0%) and the UK (+1.0%) were down in the first six months of the year. Asian exports remained weak. Exports to Japan, the province's second largest market after the US, were down 35.4% and sales to China fell 15.4%.

Source: Statistics Canada

Tourism

- **International visitor entries to BC were 3.4% higher in June than in the same month last year.** The number of visitors from the States was up 6.6%, and this was more than enough to offset an 8.9% decline in the number of entries from overseas.

Source: Statistics Canada

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Infoline Report:

Who works overtime? the gender gap

Contact: Anne Kitteridge (250) 387-0374

Originally published in April 1998 issue of *Earnings & Employment Trends*. Annual subscription is \$60 + GST

In 1997, Statistics Canada introduced an extended Labour Force Survey which asks respondents additional questions on issues such as earnings, and more detail on their hours of work. From these questions, it is now possible to determine if an employee worked "overtime" (more hours than their usual hours) in the reference week and if so, whether or not they were paid for these hours. As 1997 was the first year this data was collected, it is not yet possible to examine year-to-year changes in overtime work patterns¹. We can, however, begin to understand the extent of overtime, how much is paid for, and some of the different characteristics of those who work overtime. In this analysis, we will focus on the difference between the sexes.

In 1997, on average, 18.9 per cent of paid employees (almost one in five) worked some overtime in any given week -- their average was 8.6 additional hours per week (or 1 hour and 43 minutes per day in a five day work week).

It has long been observed that men have longer usual work hours than women. This is not just because more women work part-time, but also because a larger proportion of full-time male employees are in jobs that require a 40 hour work week. On top of that, the new data show that women are also less likely to work overtime.

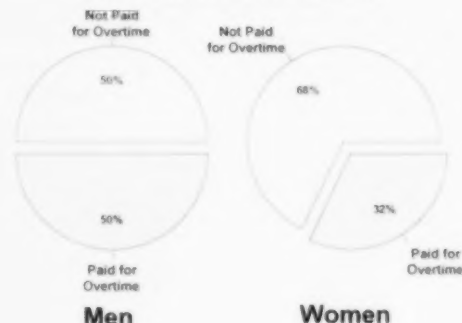
1. When we have several years of data available, overtime trends will be of value as a predictor of forthcoming labour market conditions. For example, when economic conditions begin to improve, initially employers will meet excess demand by requiring existing staff to work overtime but eventually they will be forced to hire new staff. Therefore, an observed increase in overtime may foretell an imminent improvement in the unemployment rate.

Women Work Less Overtime, and When They Do, They Work Fewer Hours of Overtime



Surprisingly, the new data also reveal that there is a significant gender gap in who gets paid for overtime work. In 1997, only 32 per cent of women received pay for their extra hours, compared to 50 per cent of men.

Men Are Paid for their Overtime Hours More Often than Women



To explain this difference in men's and women's overtime profiles, it is necessary to examine overtime patterns in different sectors of the economy. There are very wide variations in overtime requirements depending on the occupation of the employee and what industry they work in.

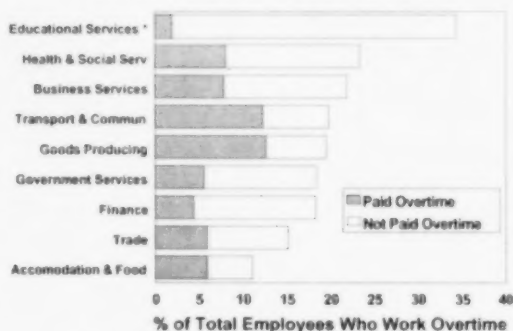
For example, amongst Teachers, by far the highest proportion of employees work over-

time in any given week – 43 per cent, compared to 31 per cent for Management and Administrative occupations which is the next highest group. At the other extreme, only 9 per cent of service workers, (eg waiters, hairdressers, security guards, etc.) and 12 per cent of clerical employees work overtime. In the mid-range of prevalence of overtime, (15-20 per cent range) are the male dominated occupations such as the primary, manufacturing and construction type jobs.

Besides differing overtime requirements by occupation groups, the pattern of overtime pay varies widely between occupations. Whether employees are on salary or an hourly wage will often dictate whether or not a person is compensated for overtime. Salaried persons are generally expected to work extra time to complete a job, without compensation. On the other hand, wage earners, particularly those in the unionized sectors of the economy, usually are paid for all overtime hours, frequently at a premium rate.

The following chart illustrates why women, more than men, are not paid for overtime.

The Highly Male Dominated Industries of Transportation and Goods Producing Have the Highest Proportion of Employees Who Get Paid Overtime



*Teachers on average work 5.1 hours of overtime each week of the year and virtually all of these hours are not paid for. This reflects the structure of this sector, where teachers are often on contract and paid at a premium wage rate for their class-room hours. The premium

wage is intended to compensate them for the lesson planning and marking undertaken on their own time.

It should be made clear that the data show no evidence that women, more than men, are exploited by their employers – men and women working in the same industry have very similar paid/unpaid overtime profiles. The fact is that women work in the sectors that have fairly stable and predictable workloads (eg. retail trade and restaurants have set business hours) or they work in the salaried management or professional positions which customarily require unpaid overtime from both men and women. Men, on the other hand, are more concentrated in the sectors that firstly, are highly unionized, and secondly, are seasonal with fluctuating operational demands.

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BC at a glance . . .		
POPULATION (thousands)		% change on one year ago
	Apr 1/98	
BC	3,958.7	1.4
Canada	30,488.9	1.0
GDP and INCOME		% change on one year ago
(BC - at market prices)	1997	
Gross Domestic Product (GDP) (\$ millions)	109,347	3.3
GDP (\$ 1992 millions)	98,201	2.2
GDP (\$ 1992 per Capita)	25,039	0.2
Personal Disposable Income (\$ 1992 per Capita)	16,515	-2.3
TRADE (\$ millions)		
Manufacturing Shipments (seas. adj.) Jun	2,743	-5.2
Merchandise Exports (raw) Jun	2,074	-9.1
Retail Sales (seasonally adjusted) Jun	2,775	2.1
CONSUMER PRICE INDEX		% change on one year ago
(all items - 1992=100)	Jul '98	
BC	110.4	0.5
Canada	108.8	1.0
LABOUR FORCE (thousands)		% change on one year ago
(seasonally adjusted)	Jul '98	
Labour Force - BC	2,040	0.6
Employed - BC	1,854	0.1
Unemployed - BC	187	5.7
	Jul '97	
Unemployment Rate - BC (percent)	9.1	8.7
Unemployment Rate - Canada (percent)	8.4	9.0
INTEREST RATES (percent)	Aug 19/98	Aug 20/97
Prime Business Rate	6.50	4.75
Conventional Mortgages - 1 year	6.75	5.65
- 5 year	7.15	7.00
US/CANADA EXCHANGE RATE	Aug 19/98	Aug 20/97
(avg. noon spot rate) Cdn \$	1.5332	1.3938
US \$ (reciprocal of above rate)	0.6522	0.7175
AVERAGE WEEKLY EARNINGS		% change on one year ago
(industrial aggregate - dollars)	May '98	
BC	618.23	-0.6
Canada	605.71	0.8
SOURCES:		
Population, Gross Domestic Product, Trade, Statistics		
Prices, Labour Force, Earnings Canada		
Interest Rates, Exchange Rates: Bank of Canada Weekly Financial Statistics		

Released this week by BC STATS

- Consumer Price Index, July 1998
- Earnings and Employment Trends, May 1998

Next week

- Business Indicators, August 1998
- Current Statistics, August 1998
- Exports, June 1998
- Tourism Room Revenue, May 1998

